



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at Midtown Park located at 510 S. Kings Drive, Charlotte, NC 28204 on May 12, 2015 at 6 p.m.

**PRC MINUTES
May 12, 2015**

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present:

Elaine Powell, Chair
Tristan McMannis, Executive Secretary
Norman Mitchell
Jude Harding
Sheryl Smith
Doug Burnett
Charlie McRee
Ed Barnhart
Aubin Guinness
Jim Garges
Michael Kirschman

PRC Absent:

Brenda McMoore
Kendel Bryant
Vacant – At Large
Vacant – South (S3)

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Powell welcomed all to the May 2015 PRC meeting and Little Sugar Creek bike ride.

Proclamations and Awards:

None

Program/Staff Presentations: Eastway Park – Playground Park Naming

Jeff Robinson, Division Director of Park Operations, asked the Park and Recreation Commission to endorse the naming of the playground at Eastway Park in memory and honor of Victoria “Vicki” Fewell. Jeff shared that from time to time the Department will consider naming a park amenity in honor of an individual that has made a significant contribution to the community. Victoria Fewell was a strong advocate for Charlotte’s East side for over 20 years working tirelessly to improve the

quality of life for its residents, especially the children. At one time she was president of Plaza Eastway Partners and at the time of her death was the President of Shannon Neighborhood. A two term US Army Veteran, she was the driving force in the planning and development of Eastway Park. For these reasons and at the suggestion of one of her dear friends, County Commissioner Pat Cotham, the Department is proposing naming the existing playground at Eastway Park in her honor. This proposal has already been before the North Region Advisory Council where it received a unanimous endorsement.

Director Garges added that Ms. Fewell and neighbors worked diligently on the design of Eastway Park, which is a wonderful park with a beautiful playground, public art and ties to existing neighborhood parks. Phase II of this park will be included in the next round of funding.

Motion was made by Commissioner McRee to endorse the naming of the existing playground at Eastway Park in honor of Victoria "Vicki" Fewell, which was seconded by Commissioner Harding and approved unanimously.

Director Garges thanked everyone and said that the Department would get a plaque and make arrangements for a dedication ceremony with staff, neighbors, friends and family.

Appointments – Advisory Council – Applicants

Motion was made by Commissioner Harding to appoint **Freddie Brown** to an unexpired term, expiring June, 2016, on the Aquatics Advisory Council, which was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved unanimously.

Commissioner Barnhart deferred the appointment of **Lindsay Jones** to the South Advisory Council. Lindsay will be placed back on the June 9 PRC meeting for appointment consideration.

Public Hearings: - Naming of County Park Property

Director's Report

Director Garges reported on the following:

Queens Tennis Court Project: A presentation was made to the Board of County Commissioners by Jim Garges, James Alsop, Mario Chang and Michael Kirschman to provide an update on the project and to ask the County to assist with funding. Queens has raised \$1.5 million of the needed \$5.3 million to complete the project for a 13 court complex and tennis center to be built on the West side of Marion Diehl Park. Queens will also provide funding in the amount of \$650,000 for a signalized entrance to the park. In addition, a presentation was made to the CRVA to seek funding from them as the complex will be able to hold Division 1 NCAA tennis tournaments. Queens will maintain the courts and fund the cost of running the tennis center. This complex would also meet some of the growing demand for additional courts in Mecklenburg County.

Queens originally planned to provide a two diamond softball complex at Marion Diehl along with the tennis courts and tennis center but there is not enough room. That investment will be put into improving one or two of the diamonds at Park Road Park.

Queens will also be working with Pender Murphy, a NCAA tennis player who, since his retirement, has started an at-risk tennis youth program. The program will be housed at Marion Diehl.

Murphy is raising money to provide transportation for at risk youth to take tennis lessons at the facility at no cost.

Fees and Charges: Fees and Charges were presented to the BOCC, which will be approved along with the budget.

PRC Annual Report: The PRC Annual Report to the BOCC will be May 19, 2015 at 6 p.m. at the Government Center.

Budget Public Hearing: May 22, 2015 is the date when the PRC can sign up to speak at the Budget Public Hearing.

Park and Recreation Program Presentation: The Department will be making a program presentation to the BOCC on June 16, 2015 on the senior initiative.

Little Sugar Creek Greenway: Director Garges made special acknowledgment of Central Region staff; Jeff Robinson, Michael Campbell, Bob Reardon and Tim Turton and the Horticulture team for the fine job they do keeping LSC GW looking great.

PRC Tree Recognition: Park and Recreation Commissioners that roll off of the Commission after completing their terms can be honored with the planting of a tree in a park of their choice. Parks that cannot be used are Romare, First Ward or Freedom. Commissioners were asked to work with Jeff Robinson to determine an appropriate tree and location.

PRC Vacancies: Effective June 9, 2015 there will be 6 vacancies on the Park and Recreation Commission. All were encouraged to be thinking of good park and recreation advocates and encourage them to apply. Commissioner Harding has resigned from the Commission effective June 1 in order to go to school, but hopes to return as soon as possible.

2008 Master Plan Update: Michael Kirschman, Deputy Director, has been presenting the updated 2008 Master Plan to all of the Advisory Councils. The plan will be brought to the PRC in June, then the BOCC, towns and the City of Charlotte for endorsement.

Consent Items

Motion was made by Commissioner Smith to approve all consent items, including the Park and Recreation Commission minutes of April 14, 2015, which was second by Commissioner Mitchell and approved unanimously.

PRC Reports and Requests

Chair Powell reported on the following:

Bio-diversity Trip: Elaine went on a Bio-Diversity trip with the Park and Recreation Department to Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge in Charleston, SC.

Hat's off to Parks: Elaine and other Park Commissioners attended the annual Hat's off to Parks event at Romare Bearden Park on May 1, 2015.

Certified Wildlife Community Habitat: Charlotte was certified as a national wildlife community habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. Chair Powell was in attendance along with Jim Garges and Michael Kirschman.

Tree Canopy Summit: Chair Powell, Michael Kirschman, Jim Garges and Jeff Robinson attended the Tree Canopy Summit. The speaker was a gentleman from the University of Delaware and currently working in New York who is planning a million trees in New York City through the Parks and Recreation Department.

PRC Annual Report to the BOCC: All the PRC were encouraged to attend the presentation of the annual report to the BOCC on May 19, 2015 at 6 p.m. at the Government Center. The presentation was included in the PRC Agenda Packet. Deputy Director, Michael Kirschman, said the BOCC are probably not aware of the number of meetings and events that the PRC attend. This annual report will be a good opportunity to let the BOCC know how active this commission is.

NACO: Director Garges reminded the Commission that the National Association of Counties (NACO) is coming to Charlotte June 11 – 16 along with the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials (NACPRO). The Department will be giving presentations and a tour.

LSC GW Completion and Bike Lane Concerns: Director Garges shared that by 2018 the Department will complete the last 5 miles of Little Sugar Creek Greenway to the South Carolina line and by 2019 to the Mallard Creek Greenway and UNCC; all on LSC GW. Commissioner Harding asked if the 5 miles to the South Carolina line were dirt-ways. Jim said they were not. Currently it is more of a trail but will ultimately be paved. Jim stated that he would bring an aerial map of LSC GW to the next PRC meeting in June. Chair Powell shared that much has been in the news and brought before the City Council about having dedicated bike lanes on greenways. Director Garges responded that our greenways are not wide enough to have a dedicated bike lane. Greenways are 10' wide and the Department has considered up to 13' wide but we must balance with respect to run-off. It would not be practical to have bike lanes on our current greenways. Commissioner Barnhart shared that this had been discussed at the Greenway Advisory Council. Greenways are designed to be shared by everyone. The problem occurs when bikers are looking to use the greenway for full-out riding.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.